

# Old Maine Academy Shares Its Opportunities With the Town

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In spite of war bulletins and defense work, a group of twenty-five or thirty men and women in Bethel, Maine, find time to gather in a schoolroom to hear and understand the music that has come down through the ages.

It is the adult music appreciation class at Gould Academy in Bethel, Maine, that little village on top of the map among the hills of Oxford County above the intervals of the Androscoggin River near the New Hampshire border line. Here the farmer's wife and mother of sons and the man of the world, who has come to seek peace in the quiet village, gather every week to hear the music that has inspired many to pick up their fragments of hope and build anew.

They are recordings, of course, but of the very best to be had. They are from the Carnegie Foundation Musical Library, the gift of the Carnegie Corporation granted to Gould Academy several years ago when Mrs. Carnegie became interested in the Academy and the opportunity it was giving to the boys and girls in this part of Maine where the rest of the world seems so far away and remote.

## Meeting A Need

A music appreciation class for adults may not seem such an all-important undertaking for those of us who, at the single turn of a knob, can command the performance of the best conductors and musicians. Not so, however, for the people in that remote region of Maine, where even radio reception is too poor to give complete enjoyment of broadcasts. To these people, then, this hour or so of great music now being presented to them is a high light of the week.

How did it come to pass? Music appreciation is part of the student program at Gould Academy, the private school that serves as a high school to the local girls and boys, and as a first-class prep school for out-of-staters.

"The students were so enthusiastic about the course that the parents requested that we have a similar course for them," said Miss Ann Griggs, musical director at Gould, who conducts the classes.

Some of the members in this class of music appreciation have had little or no background in

music. Miss Griggs therefore starts them off with simple folk songs and shows them how these have become themes for some of our best-loved music.

## Intelligent Listening

"Ordinarily," she says, "we just let the sweet sounds flow through our ears. That is listening with the heart and the body. For complete appreciation of the finer points of music, we must listen not only with our hearts and bodies, but also with the mind."

Music is becoming important to these people in Bethel, and the Academy in the town is bringing it to them. At Easter, in the small white Congregational Church, adjoining Headmaster Elwood F. Ireland's house on the school grounds, in an appropriate candlelight setting they are brought the memorable music of "The Crucifixion." At Christmas they hear the glorious "Messiah."

Not often does such an independent, privately endowed school as Gould Academy allow the townspeople to partake of the opportunities it has to offer the children who go there. But, then, this is only another example of democratic ideals in operation.

Even the gift of the musical library and the modern development of the school are such examples. The latter is the story of the man of great wealth, William Bingham, 2nd, who came to the hills of Bethel for rest and peace, and who found it. To show his gratitude, he turned a major part of his fortune into a charitable foundation to help the mental and physical development of the people of northern Maine. And so he became the benefactor of Gould Academy. Now the boys and girls of Bethel have what is claimed to be one of the most up-to-date and most completely equipped and staffed secondary schools in the United States.